VOLUME 1, WINTER 2021

AGE OF BRONZE

HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

HUMAN SACRIFICE
IN ANCIENT EGYPT

HOW TO READ
THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH

SUMERIAN WORSHIPERS

LIFE HACK OF THE FIRST CIVILIZATION

TREASURES OF THE MAYKOP KURGAN

MYSTERIOUS KEFTIU
CRETAN-EGYPTIAN
RELATIONS

LAGASH VS UMMA
HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

CYCLADIC FIGURINES
KEROS IDOL HEAD

REDDIT R/AGEOFBRONZE

AGE OF BRONZE

02 | SUMERIAN WORSHIPERS: SUBSTITUTES OF PEOPLE BEFORE THE FACE OF DEITIES

07 | CYCLADIC FIGURINES: KEROS IDOL HEAD

10 | HUMAN SACRIFICE IN ANCIENT EGYPT

16 | HOW TO READ THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH CORRECTLY

20 | TREASURES OF THE MAYKOP KURGAN

25 | MYSTERIOUS KEFTIU: THE PROBLEM OF CRETAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

32 | HUNDRED YEARS' WAR: CONFRONTATION BETWEEN LAGASH AND UMMA

HISTORIA MAXIMUM

PROJECT BY HISTORIA MAXIMUM © 2021

SUMERIAN WORSHIPERS

SUBSTITUTES OF PEOPLE BEFORE THE FACE OF DEITIES

NEAR EAST, MESOPOTAMIA, SUMER, EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD

-2900 -2300 0 2000

Before reading this text, you looked into the eyes of a man who lived four and a half thousand years ago in Syria. His name was Ebih-Il and he was an official in the Sumerian city of Mari. You say that this is nonsense and it is just an ancient figurine. You are absolutely right and wrong. But how is this possible?

Like you and me, the Sumerians tried to make life easier for themselves in all matters. Even such important matters as communication with the gods through prayer.

A good relationship with the gods was the key to health and success, which meant it took a long time to pray. The blessing of the gods had to be earned. Continuous prayer would be ideal.

But what if you need to work during the day and rest at night and / or continue humanity?

To solve this complex issue, the Sumerians used two time-tested technologies at once.

The first such technology was magic. We are talking about ordinary magic, when people tried to influence the world around them with the help of special spells and rituals. For example, to revive an inanimate object or endow it with spiritual powers.

The second technology was art. Yes, yes, it was a time when there was no time for any useless beauty (but this is not certain).

Ancient hunters of the Stone Age painted scenes of successful hunting on the walls of caves, carved figures of people and animals from bone and wood in order to "program" the future and ensure their success.

The Black-Headed People (saĝ-gíg, lit. 'head' + 'black' or saĝ-gíg-ga, lit. 'head' + 'black' + 'carry'), as the Sumerians called themselves, treated their gods with trepidation and respect, but in fact did not consider them very smart or ideal. Perhaps they thought so of themselves - well, who does not think so.

Therefore, they were convinced that the gods could be outwitted with the help of magic and art. If everything is more or less clear with the magical power of rituals, then the magical power of art requires additional clarification.

The Sumerians were sure that their gods physically (as far as possible for the gods) live in special houses built for them by people. Now we call these houses temples. In the temple, the deity could listen to the person and help him.

To constantly be in touch with their supernatural patron, the Sumerians began to make their substitutes, their continually praying copies of wood, clay or stone. Such copies were statuettes that depicted the petitioner and were placed in the temple. Scientists call such figures as adorants (from the Latin word "admiring, praying").

With the help of special ceremonies, the figurines were "revived" in order to serve as representatives of the interests of man before God. For a successful prayer, a portrait resemblance between the believer and his replacement was not required. The function of binding an object to a specific person was performed by magic.

Group of figurines from Eshnunna
The hoard was discovered deep within the Abu Temple at Eshnunna.

The statues were stacked in several layers within a 33 x 20 in (85 x 50 cm) pit, located about 18 in (45 cm) below the floor of the Early Dynastic (3000 to 2350 BC) version of the Square Temple

Since the Sumerians had many gods, the representative figurine had to be placed in all the temples. But here new problems arose. There were many people, and there was not enough space in the temple. How to make God listen to me, and not my neighbor with his (undoubtedly) stupid requests? The answer is obvious. It is my figurine that needs to stand out.

More influential members of the community could afford to put a larger representative in the temple than ordinary people. The competition in figure size was limited by the small size of the temples and the figurines never exceeded human height. The average height is 40 cm or 16 in.

Standing female worshiper from Nippur, Early Dynastic IIIa, ca. 2600–2500 BC, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

When it is impossible to increase the quantitative characteristics, then you have to work with the quality of the object.

Prayer admiration is the main purpose of the statuette. If you show the deity that your substitute listens to the advice of wise priests or gods, then the deity will choose only you from all those praying.

If you show the deity that your magic copy is experiencing humble happiness from communicating with his master, then the deity will choose only you. If you show that you are open to secret knowledge or a divine message, then the figurines of all other losers can be thrown out of the temple as useless.

You need ears to listen. To show joy, you can smile. The symbol of attention among the Sumerians was an open and focused gaze.

From this we can conclude that the ears, mouth and eyes were the most important parts of the magic figurine. The Sumerian masters deliberately increased the size of these parts to emphasize the righteousness of the prayer.

Sometimes it went too far and the eyes took the form of a circle. At the same time, anthropomorphism was lost, so that usually the ancient artisans tried not to go beyond the reasonable limits of artistic exaggeration. At the same time, a mysterious soft half-smile became a desirable attribute.

Equally important was the adorant posture. They stand or sit motionless. Their arms are most often crossed over their chests in a prayer gesture or holding a vessel for sacrifices. This is what the people looked or should have looked like when he came to the temple.

Male head or mask. Mari (Tall Hariri). Early Dynastic Period, mid-3rd millennium BCE. Limestone, bitumen, black and white stones. Musée Barbier-Mueller

Of course, at some point, all the figurines became very similar to each other. No one wanted his deputy for divine affairs to look bad in the eyes of the owner of the temple. For the manufacture of figurines, they began to use beautiful expensive materials from distant countries.

Instead of clay and plaster, we see ancient works of art (from our point of view) made of diorite, limestone and alabaster.

A vivid and expressive look was provided by the pupil of blue lapis lazuli and the whites of the eye from white sea shells. The black bitumen eye contour accentuated the most important part of the figurine.

Traces of polychromy on other figures of worshipers suggest that figures like these were almost certainly completely colored.

Statue depicting Salim
Sumerian civilization, Mari, Syria,
3rd Millenium BC,
National Museum of Damascus

Statue of Ebih-Il
Sumerian civilization, Mari, Syria,
25th-century BC,
Musée du Louvre, Paris

As a rule, we find figurines of men. This is due to the fact that the older man was responsible to society and the gods for his entire family. Exceptions to the general rule are related to the high status of women who left their adorant in a sacred place.

Finally, most importantly, worshipers represent successful and influential people. This means that ordinary people could not use this "technology" or they were made of fragile materials.

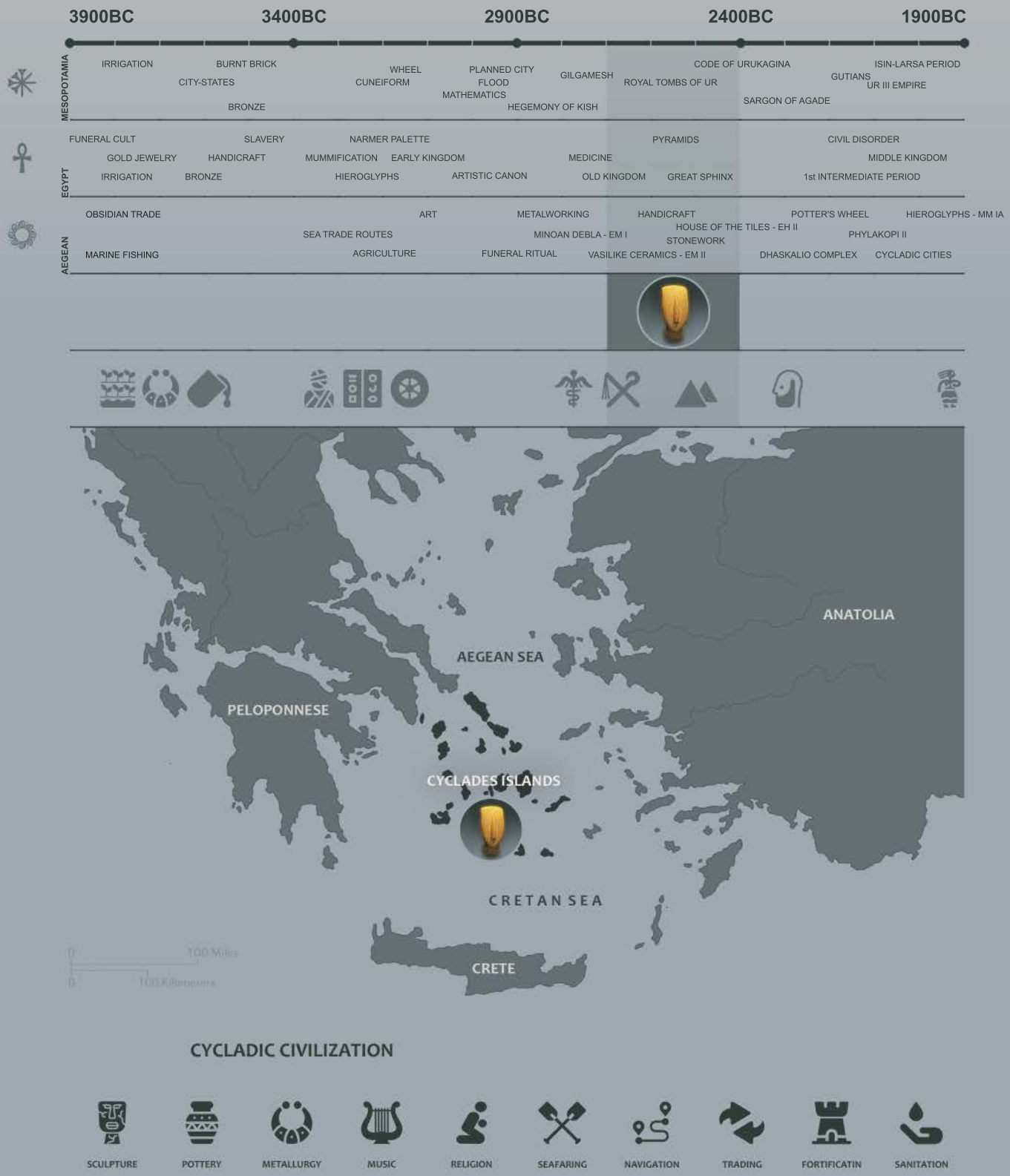
To protect their magical counterparts from any trouble, the Sumerians sought to hide the figurines inside the temple. To do this, they walled up adorants in benches or under the floor. Nowadays, when excavating ancient temples, archaeologists find these hiding places.

The ancient Sumerians feared their gods and their wrath. The ancient Sumerians wanted divine help during difficult times. But they also tried to manipulate supernatural forces. Therefore, they made figurines with which they established a magical connection.

And who knows if this ancient magic and a piece of soul remained in the huge blue eyes of the alabaster "double" of an official from the city of Mari named Ebih-Il.

BACK TO CONTENTS

CYCLADIC FIGURINES - KEROS IDOL HEAD



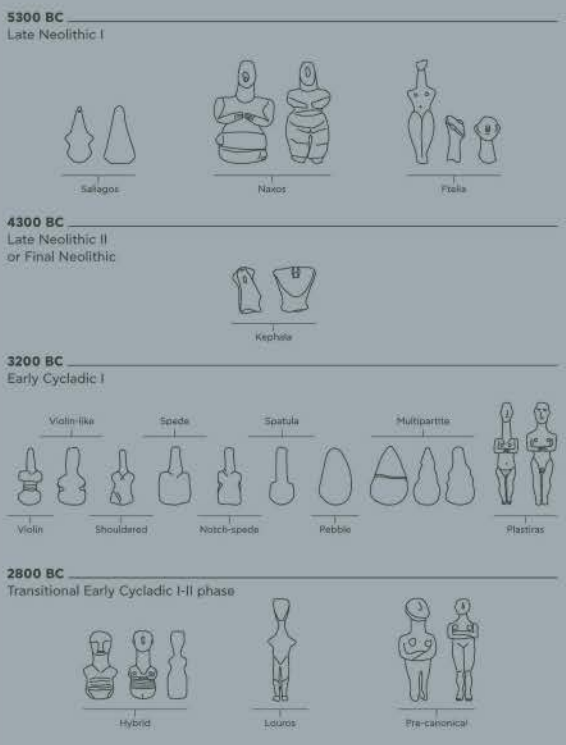
ORIGINAL ARTIFACT
TRACES OF ANCIENT PAINTING

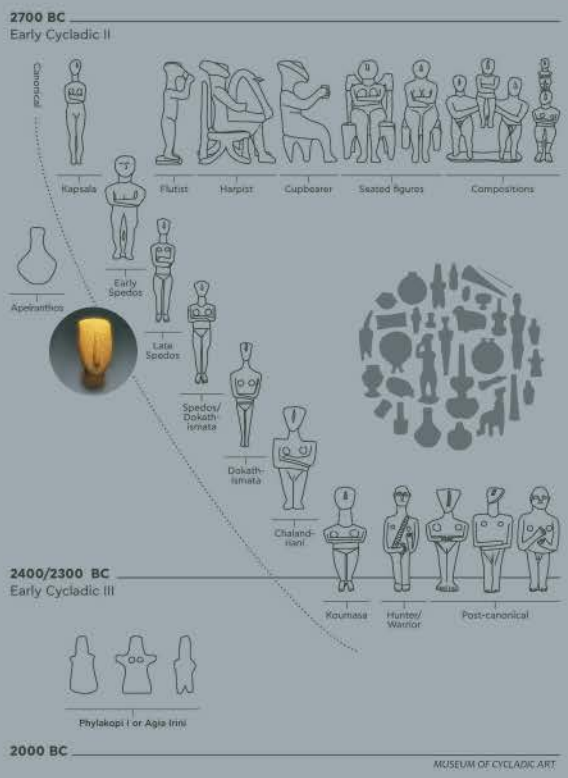
MODERN REPLICA
PAINTED AS ON THE ORIGINAL

MODERN REPLICA
RESTORED ORIGINAL APPEARANCE

HEAD OF AN IDOL FROM KEROS

KEROS-SYROS CULTURE | SPEDOS TYPE | BRONZE AGE, EARLY CYCLADIC II, 2700 - 2400 BCE | MARBLE, PAINT | BADISCHE LANDESMUSEUM, KARLSRUHE, GERMANY





BACK TO CONTENTS

REDDIT R/MINOANS

HOME OF FANS OF THE ANCIENT MINOAN CIVILIZATION

HUMAN SACRIFICE IN ANCIENT EGYPT

NORTH AFRICA, ANCIENT EGYPT, EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD, DYNASTY I

-3100 -2900 0 2000

In Ancient Egypt, by about the third millennium BC, there were ideas about the afterlife, which was a copy of the world of the living. By this time, the Southern and Northern kingdoms are united under the rule of one ruler-the pharaoh. For their posthumous existence, the pharaohs erect mastaba tombs. Here, in extensive vaults, the property needed by the king in the other world was stored. And around the tomb, there were burials of servants who were sacrificed so that they would continue to serve the master after death.

LISTEN AS A YOUTUBE PODCAST

One of the first kings of united Egypt, the pharaoh of the First dynasty Djer lived at the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC (Early Dynastic period). His tomb in Abydos, taking into account the above-ground buildings, had an area of more than four hundred square meters.

Here, in extensive vaults, the property necessary for the king in the other world was stored. And around the tomb, archaeologists found 338 burials of servants who were supposed to provide the pharaoh with a comfortable life. They were mostly free women, not slaves. They were awarded separate burials, many graves had stone steles with their names on them.

The tomb of Djer was looted in ancient times, and repeatedly. So the king lost his afterlife property, but the servants who accompanied him remained with him forever.

Ceremonial Temple Knife
Flint, pressure flaked, with gold handle
c. 3100-2890 BC, Early Dynastic Period
Reign of Horus Djer, Dynasty I
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

For Queen Merneith, who ruled Egypt after Djer, a crypt with eight extensive storerooms was built in Abydos. 41 people are buried around the tomb. They had separate graves and stone steles with names. In addition, archaeologists found a whole "quarter" nearby, where 77 more people were sacrificed for the queen.

According to some scientists in Sakkara, the queen arranged afterlife "workshops" with a full staff of "employees". Here were found a master shipbuilder with models of boats, an artist with whom vessels filled with paint were laid, a master for making stone vases with tools and samples of his work, a potter, etc.

The Royal Funerary Stelae
Egypt, necropolis Umm el-Qa'ab
Early Dynastic Period, Dynasty I
Merneith (left), Semerkhet, Qa'a
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Merneith reign (with Den) ca. 2950 BC

An even larger retinue was taken with him to the afterlife by a representative of the same First Dynasty named Djet. In Abydos, his tomb is surrounded by 174 graves of servants sacrificed. Another 161 people are buried in a separate block.

The next king Den ruled for a long time. He strengthened the borders of Egypt, ensured the security of trade routes, was engaged in construction, conducted a population census; arts and crafts flourished under him.

King Den celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of his reign with pomp. During the pre-dynastic period, this holiday (according to some researchers) was accompanied by the ritual murder of the king.

Label of King Djet
Abydos, Umm el-Qaab, Tomb Z
ca. 2980 BC, Early Dynastic Period
Reign of Horus Djet, Dynasty I
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

The Egyptians believed that the magical power of the ruler eventually runs out and that no one is allowed to reign for more than thirty years. After this period, a solemn ceremony of "transfer of power" was arranged. The new ruler killed the old one and took his place.

However, by the time of Den, the rulers of Egypt had stopped rushing to the afterworld. Instead of the king, they began to bury his statue. Instead of a new king, an old one remained on the throne, whose youth and sacred power was renewed with the help of special rituals. The Pharaoh was in no hurry with his funeral, but he had prepared a different fate for his servants. 136 people were buried around his tomb in Abydos.

Face From a Statue of king Den
Findspot: Egypt, Probably Abydos
2970 BC, Early Dynastic Period,
Reign of Horus Den, Dynasty I
Wood, 16.3 x 9.7 cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Den's heir named Anedjib ruled for quite a long time, but his tomb is quite small. The number of servants buried next to the pharaoh is also small - 64 people.

Being small, the tomb had a remarkable feature. It had a cell, the walls of which were completely paneled with wood. Quality construction timber in ancient Egypt was a luxury, and wooden items were a sign of prestige.

Of Anedjib's buildings works it is known he built a new fortress "Horus golden of body".

During the reign of this pharaoh, Lower Egypt was engulfed in revolt. While we know that the royal army pacified the rebels, it is possible that Horus Anedjib died a violent death.

Fragment of a statue of King Anedjib
Sakkara, Djoser's pyramid
2930 BC, Early Dynastic Period,
Reign of Horus Anedjib, Dynasty I
Dark green slate
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

His successor by the name of Semerkhet ruled in troubled times. Therefore, the servants who were to accompany their master in the afterlife were buried inside the mastaba. Separate burial chambers were arranged for them. The king's mastaba originally covered the 67 subsidiary tombs. This would suggest that the people buried there were buried at the same time as the king. Among the sacrificial graves were two graves of dwarfs.

This pharaoh began the shameful tradition of stealing the treasures of his predecessors. It is known that he erased the name of king Anedjib from stone vessels and replaced them with his own. Also in his grave were many items from the tombs of queen Merneith and king Den. There were suggestions that the rule of this ruler was illegal.

At the time of Semerkhet, Egypt already traded with the Levant in luxury goods. It is also known that the king built himself a new palace and the house of royal wives (harem).

Stele of the dwarf Nefer
Umm el-Qaab, Tomb of Semerkhet
ca. 2920 BC, Early Dynastic Period
British Museum, London

It should be noted that the remains of many people who served the pharaohs of the Early Dynastic period show signs of fractures. Now it is difficult to say whether the servants were crippled before death or immediately after it. This was probably done so that they could not escape from their master in the afterlife.

Nevertheless, the lords showed some concern for the posthumous fate of the sacrificed people. They were swaddled in linen cloth and placed in a wooden coffin, usually in a bent form, on their side, with their heads to the north. The coffin was placed in an oblong pit with a wooden ceiling. Vessels with food and drink were placed nearby.

Personal belongings of the deceased were not supposed to be, but the tools they needed for work were put in the grave. A low structure with a rounded top was built over the grave, sometimes a stone stele with a name was placed.

It is difficult to say whether their numerous servants went with the pharaohs to the afterlife voluntarily or against their will. The fact is that almost until the end of the era of the Ancient Kingdom, the Egyptians were not allowed to build their tombs. Those who did not receive the right to build a well-maintained "house of eternity" had to be content with a simple grave and a terrible afterlife.

Only towards the end of the Ancient Kingdom, after the weakening of power, did the nobles begin to erect tombs without the highest permission.

Burial Vessels; Africa, Egypt; Early Dynastic Period, Dynasty I; British Museum, London

But in the era of the Middle Kingdom, the pharaohs again appropriated a monopoly in this important issue for their subjects. And only by the end of the Middle Kingdom did the Egyptians have the opportunity to independently manage their afterlife existence.

As long as the monopoly on the construction of tombs belonged to the pharaohs, getting into the afterlife entourage was one of the few opportunities for an Egyptian to ensure his soul's immortality and well-being beyond the grave.

At least until the middle of the period of the Ancient Kingdom, gods and demons did not interfere in the funeral life of the Egyptians. A person who managed to get into the afterlife remained forever to lead a comfortable existence there. Therefore, it cannot be excluded that the servants voluntarily followed their masters, preferring eternity beyond the grave to a short-lived earthly life, even if they had to go to death for this.

Human sacrifices accompanied the funerals of the rulers of Egypt only in ancient times. Semerkhet was probably the last king of Egypt under whom they practiced. The tomb of his successor and the last ruler of the First Dynasty king Qa'a and members of his family are surrounded by the tombs of courtiers (26 burials), but archaeologists doubt for several reasons that these people were sacrificed.

Label with the name of King Qa'a
Egypt, Abydos, Tomb of Qa'a (Tomb Q)
Penn Museum, Philadelphia

Perhaps they were buried next to their late masters later. In any case, from that time on, the custom of human sacrifice goes out of fashion.

Later, everyone, even the pharaohs, was satisfied with painted or sculpted portraits of servants. For this, the Egyptian priests used the concept of magical counterparts and substitutes.

As for sacrifices on other occasions, in historical times the Egyptians did not use people as victims. Egyptian art has left many images in which kings kill captured enemies. At the same time, there is no reason to think that these murders were a sacred act. Although gods are usually present in such scenes, they are present in many images of the king, confirming with their authority any of his actions.

HOW TO READ THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH

The Epic of Gilgamesh is considered the world's oldest literary work, created in the 22nd century BCE by the ancient Sumerians, the founders of the Mesopotamia civilization.

It is difficult to judge whether this is really so, since the list we got from the famous cuneiform library of Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, refers only to the 7th century BCE, and its earlier copies (some of which date back to 1800 BCE, that is, almost the time of the reign of the famous legislator and conqueror Hammurabi) contain only fragments of the text.

The epic does contain references to the predecessors of the Assyrians and even to pre-Babylonian times, but since it was clearly subjected to very strong processing by Ashurbanapal's contemporaries, it is difficult to say which episodes were present in the original epic, and which ones - inserted by the Assyrians.

The epic tells about the adventures of the legendary founder of the city of Ur, the demigod Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu, their campaign against the ruler of the mountains of Lebanon, the monster Humbaba, the death of Enkidu, who was hated by the goddess rejected by Gilgamesh Ishtar, and the journey of Gilgamesh himself to the land of the dead to the mistress of the gods Siduri and the forefather Utnapishtim for the flower of immortality.

Colossal statue of a hero, Gilgamesh
Assyria, Khorsabad, late 8th c. BCE
Replica, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
photo: Olaf M. Teßmer

However, what do we know about the prototype of the legendary hero? Did such a person exist in reality?

We know in the 27th century BCE the city was ruled by a Sumerian king from the 1st dynasty named Bilgamesh. He was the son of the legendary hero Lugalbanda and the successor to King Dumuzid the Fisherman.

According to Sumerian texts, he successfully completed the struggle against the hegemony of the powerful city of Kish. This war was started by King Dumuzid, who fought against the Kish king Enmebaragesi.

Bilgamesh defeated Enmebaragesi and later his son Agga. Then our hero established a hegemony over a large part of Sumer, which was retained under his successors (at least this is what the "List of Sumerian Kings" from Nippur says).

Bilgamesh was succeeded by his son Ur-Nungal. After his death, Bilgamesh was deified. In Sumerian legends, he was also credited with the construction of new walls of Uruk and a march east to the mountainous "Country of the Cedar" (the Zagros mountains - between Sumer and Elam, approximately where the eastern "Subir" of the inscriptions of King Eannatum was located).

Fictionalization led to the emergence of Sumerian stories about Bilgamesh's murder of the demon Huvava, about his friendship with Enkidu, enmity with some gods, the murder of a heavenly bull, and a trip to the ends of the world for the herb of immortality (which ended in failure).

Based on these plots, around the turn of the III-II millennium BCE formed an epic about Gilgamesh in Akkadian. The poem became one of the main works of Mesopotamian literature of the II-I millennia BCE. At the same time, some of the plot's motives were replaced with more understandable and modern ones. The "Country of the Cedar" in it was transferred to the West and identified with the cedar mountains of Lebanon. Also included in the epic is the myth of the flood.

In any case, we are talking about a literary work that was "polished" by generations of ancient authors. In the final version, the epic influenced the ancient Greek "Homers", and hence the Greco-Roman and Western literature.

Tablet 6 of The Epic of Gilgamesh
Neo-Assyrian, 7th cent. BCE,
Library of king Ashurbanipal
© The Trustees of the British Museum

On the Internet, you can easily find a free translation of the ancient text into English and read the "Epic of Gilgamesh". However, there is one problem. From the earliest version on, a great literary work was created to be read aloud. Fortunately, we can hear what the ancient text sounded like thanks to modern scholars.

But that's not all. The ideal way to get acquainted with the Mesopotamian masterpiece was to do it as the ancients did. And the ancient Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians listened to the singers. These people played a musical instrument and sang every line of the epic as the great Peter Pringle does now.

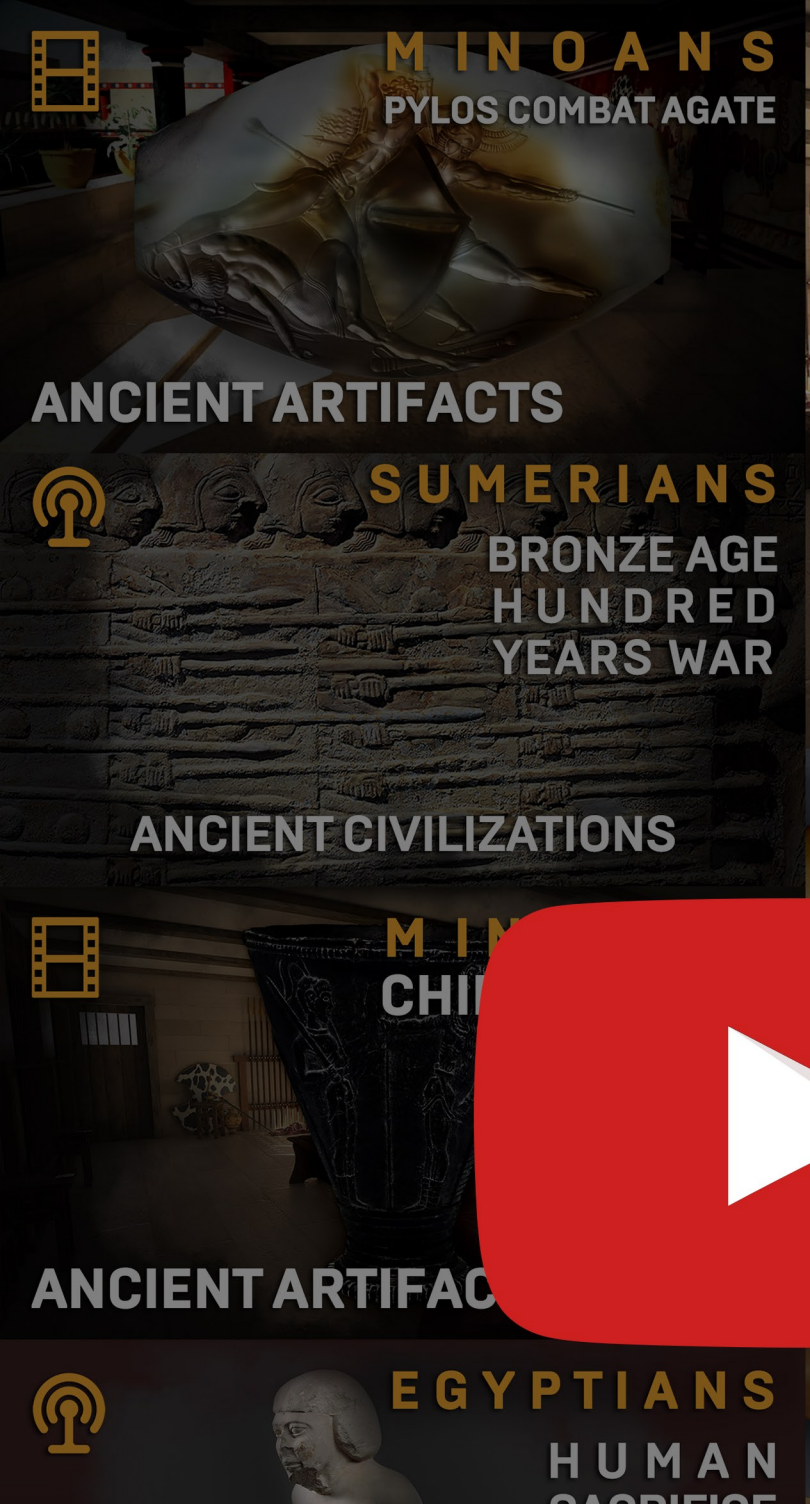
Enjoy my friends, enjoy as the Epic of Gilgamesh must be listened to!
Click on the links below to listen on YouTube!

PETER PRINGLE - THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH IN SUMERIAN

PETER PRINGLE - GILGAMESH LAMENT FOR ENKIDU

PETER PRINGLE - THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH (TABLET ONE)

BACK TO CONTENTS


MINOANS
PYLOS COMBAT AGATE
ANCIENT ARTIFACTS
SUMERIANS
BRONZE AGE
HUNDRED
YEARS WAR
ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS
MIN
CHI
ANCIENT ARTIFAC
EGYPTIANS
HUMAN
SACRIFICE
ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS
MINOANS
MYSTERIOUS
KEFTIU
ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

TREASURES OF THE MAYKOP KURGAN

EUROPE AND ASIA, KUBAN, NORTH CAUCASUS, MAIKOP CULTURE

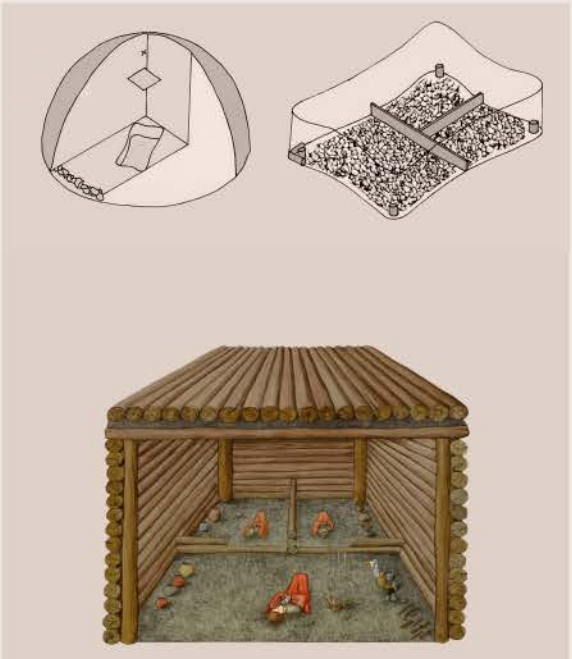
-3700 -3000 0 2000

Maikop culture is the archaeological culture of the Kuban of the Bronze Age. Named after the Maikop mound. The basis of the economy is cattle breeding and agriculture. They made tools and weapons from stone and bronze, and jewelry from gold and silver. Wheeled carts were used to move. Red pottery made with a potter's wheel.

People of the Maikop culture most often settled in mountain gorges. They chose places that were difficult to reach and convenient for defense for their villages. Their settlements were fenced off with powerful stone walls. The rulers and priests were buried under large mounds. In addition to a large number of precious jewelry, weapons, pottery, the bodies of other people were placed in the grave together with the deceased, who were specially killed for this.

MAIKOP KURGAN. An archaeological monument of the early Bronze Age. The mound was located in the eastern part of the city of Maykop on the banks of the Belaya River, a tributary of the Kuban River.

HISTORY OF STUDY. Locals called this mound Oshad, after the hero of one of the Adyghe legends, who, as they believed in the old days, was buried in it. In 1897, the mound was excavated by the expedition of Professor Veselovsky and became widely known as the Great Maykop Mound. In 1911, the researcher Talgren placed it together with other similar monuments of the North-Western Caucasus in a special group of "big Kuban mounds". In the future, this concept was geographically expanded and the term Maikop culture of the early.



Reconstruction of the burial mound and burial chamber

Bronze Age of the North Caucasus, after the name of the mound itself, was recognized as more successful.

The Maikop mound is one of the richest among the excavated burial complexes of the Early Bronze Age in Europe. All the finds are kept in the State Hermitage Museum.

DESCRIPTION. The mound was a huge rounded earthen mound with a height of 10.65m (35ft). In addition to the main burial, at a depth of 3.20m (10.5ft) from the top, a burial was found, in time close to the construction of the mound itself. The position of the skeleton, apparently, was crouched, with a spear tip made of copper or bronze, a silver spiral pendant and pieces of red ochre.

The main grave under the embankment in the center of the mound was surrounded by a cromlech in the form of a ring of limestone slabs. This huge rectangular pit had the following dimensions: 5.33m (17.5ft) x 3.73m (12ft) x 1.42m (4.6ft). The grave was oriented in the direction of northeast - southwest. The walls of the pit had wooden fortifications, and the floor was lined with pebbles. Shallow pits from the pillars are fixed in the corners.

The pit was divided by wooden partitions into three chambers, each of which contained a burial. The transverse one divided the grave into the southern and northern halves, and the northern one was divided into two equal parts. In the largest chamber, there was the burial of a male elder of the clan or the leader of

the tribe. In the other two, north-western and north-eastern, presumably female burials - wives or concubines. All three were buried in a crouched position on their sides and covered with red ochre.

FINDS FROM BURIALS. The main male burial was distinguished by the richness of the accompanying inventory. The whole skeleton was dotted with a lot of stamped gold plates, as well as various beads made of gold, silver, carnelian, turquoise, lapis lazuli. 37 plates of a larger size and 31 smaller ones depicted lions, 19 similar miniature plates were made in the form of bulls, 38 stamped large rings and 10 double five-petalled rosettes were also found. Presumably, these ornaments could be sewn on clothes, a bedspread or a canopy.

Next to the skull were gold earrings, and under it lay two narrow gold ribbons with small paired drilled holes. They are reconstructed as tiaras decorated with the aforementioned five-petalled rosettes.

Thin strips of silver lay all over the bottom of the grave, some of them still had silver carnations. Most likely, they could serve as the upholstery of some wooden object.

Along the backbone, from the skull to the tibia, six silver rods-tubes 1.03m (4.6ft) in length lay parallel to each other: two silver with gold ends, on which one gold bull figurine was impaled; two entirely silver with the same silver bulls and two silver with gold ends, but without figures.

Solar or astral signs are engraved on the foreheads of the bulls, none of which is repeated. The rods were interpreted as symbols of power - wands or scepters, as a support for the canopy over the buried or as a bundle of ritual rods or arrows of the "priest-king". Two silver and three gold hemispherical caps were also found next to them.

Closer to the eastern wall of the chamber, 17 vessels lay in a row parallel to the rods: 2 gold, 14 silver and 1 stone. Eight almost identical clay stucco pots stood against the western wall.

Diagram of the position of the artifacts in the burial chamber

Of greatest interest are two miniature silver vessels decorated with embossed images. A mountain landscape was stamped on the throat of one of them. There is an assumption that the depicted line of mountain peaks corresponds to the outlines of the Caucasian ridge, as it is visible from Maykop, which may indicate the local production of the vessel.

However, this is unprovable. The throat of the second vessel is smooth, an ornamental stripe is engraved between the throat and the body. The style of these images is associated with the Near East and Egypt.

Tools and weapons were also included in the funeral inventory. Near the knee bones, near a bundle of silver rods, several flint bilaterally processed diamond-shaped arrowheads and a number of flint microlitic tools were found.

In the southeast corner of the burial there was a set of ten objects made of bronze – a flat dagger, two wedge-shaped axes, a battle axe, a flat knife, an awl.

No tools and weapons were found in the two northern burials, their burial inventory turned out to be much more modest.

However, there were the same strips of silver as in the southern part of the burial.

Massive gold rings with carnelian beads were found in the bone in the northeastern chamber in the skull area.

At the hands lay gold and carnelian beads, similar to those found in the southern burial. Copper vessels of various shapes stood along the eastern wall of the chamber.

In the northwest chamber, near the backbone, there were the same gold and carnelian beads. In the northwest corner there was a large clay vessel.

In total, about 6,000 gold, more than 1,000 silver, more than 1,200 carnelian and 60 turquoise beads were found in the mound. The total weight of all gold products is 3 kg (6.6lbs), and silver - 5.3 kg (11.7lbs).

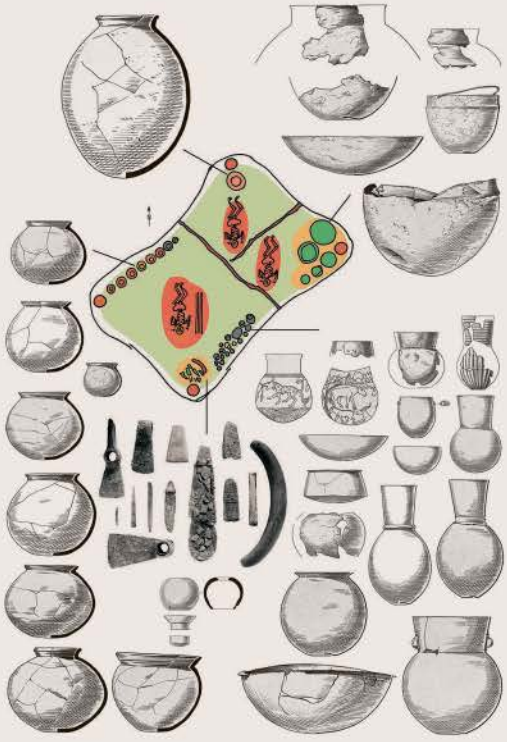
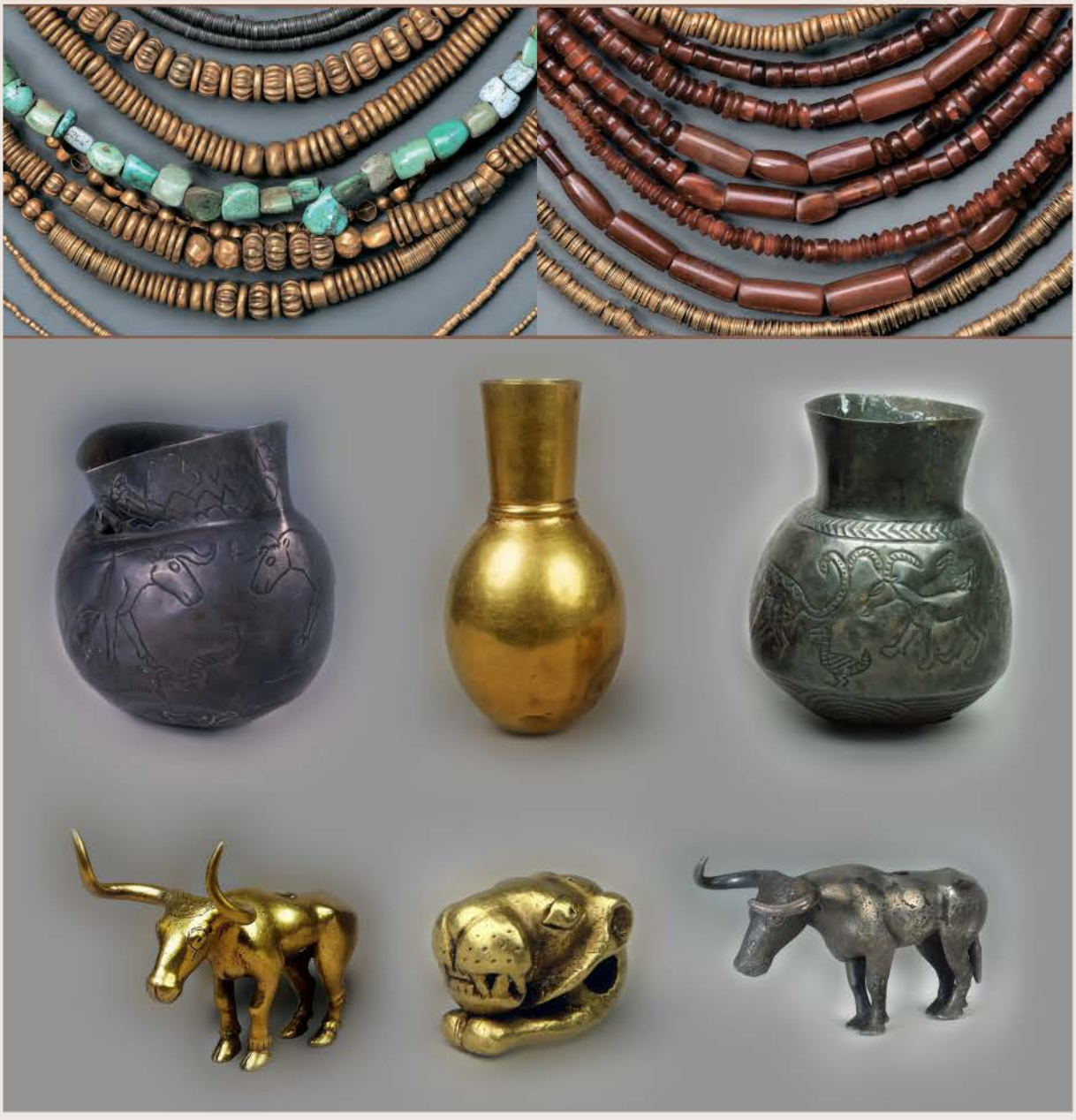


Diagram of the position of the artifacts in the burial chamber

INTERPRETATION, CONNECTION WITH OTHER CULTURES

The materials of the kurgan indicate the presence of property and social stratification in the Maikop society. This monument is also being considered in connection with the question of the influence of the Near-Asian cultural component in the development of the Maikop culture. The artistic style, the tradition of ceramic production, a number of jewelry - all this testifies to the existence of close ties between the tribes of the North Caucasus and the cultural centers of the Near East. However, the issue of local production or the imported nature of some products remains a subject of discussion.



BACK TO CONTENTS

MYSTERIOUS KEFTIU

THE PROBLEM OF CRETAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

NORTH AFRICA, ANCIENT EGYPT, NEW KINGDOM, DYNASTY XVIII

-1550 -1290 0 2000

On the walls of ancient Egyptian tombs built during the reign of the 18th dynasty, scientists noticed images of people whom the Egyptians called Keftiu. These people were very similar to how the inhabitants of Crete portrayed themselves on the walls of the so-called "new palaces". At the same time, in the Bible we know about the existence of a people called "Caphtorim" and their country called "Caphtor". But is our knowledge enough to say that the mysterious Keftiu are representatives of the ancient Minoan civilization from the island of Crete?

LISTEN AS A YOUTUBE PODCAST

The term Caphtorim, Kaptar and Keftiu

Today in historical science a consensus has been reached on the interpretation of the term "Caphtorim". Most researchers identify the biblical term "Caphtorim" with "Kaptar" from the archives of the Syrian kingdom of Mari and the Egyptian "Keftiu".The most convincing interpretation is that this term penetrated into the Egyptian language in the era of the Middle Kingdom.

The fact that the Keftiu people lived in Crete is supported by two arguments:

The Egyptian term "Keftiu" in the tombs of the 18th dynasty accompanies images of foreigners, who by their appearance are reliably identified by people of the Minoan culture.

In the topographic list of Amenhotep III of Kom el-Hetan, the section entitled "Keftiu and the Danuna" contains the toponyms of Crete and the Peloponnese.

The Aegean List as contained on the statue base found at Amenhotep's mortuary temple at Kom el-Hetan 1386-1349 or 1388-1351 BC

Basic facts about Keftiu / Kaptar

The Minoans are descended from the earliest Neolithic population of the island of Crete, which first appeared on a previously uninhabited island around 7000 BC. Perhaps the first settlers came from Anatolia or, according to another theory, from mainland Greece. The language of the pre-Greek population of Crete, apparently, did not belong to either the Afrasian or Indo-European family of languages.

The term "Kaptar" and "Keftiu" was used in Egyptian and Mesopotamian sources from the 18th to the 13th century BC. Later cases of use are based only on the established tradition of using this term in early texts. After the XIII century BC, neither the country nor the people were recorded, which would be called by this name. Attempts to use this outdated term in newly compiled texts indicate that its meaning was incomprehensible to the authors of the 1st millennium BC.

Cretan-Egyptian ties reached their highest intensity after the volcanic eruption on the island of Santorini. This was when the Achaeans from Greece took over the dominant position in Crete. In Egyptian sources of XV-XIV centuries BC they are known as "Danuna".

The presence of Cretan artisans in Egypt is evidenced by the Minoan murals in Tell el-Daba. The idea of the Egyptian origin of the Danaans was reflected in the ancient Greek myth about the flight of Danae and his daughters from the Nile Delta.

The Minoan bull-leaping fresco
Egypt, Tell el-Dab
Dynasty XVIII, 1479 – 1425 BC
reign: Hatshepsut / Thutmose III
M. Bietak reconstruction

The emergence of the term

No mention of the ancient Egyptian term "Keftiu" has come down to us in the texts recorded earlier in the New Kingdom period. An exception is the title of the priest of Horus Kefti on the stele during the reign of Pharaoh Senusret I. The possible cult of the god Horus of Crete in Egypt can be compared with the cult of the "Lady from Byblos" of the goddess Hathor.

There are other reasons to believe that the term "Keftiu" arose already in the era of the Middle Kingdom. This is indicated by the mention of the Keftiu people in the Admonitions of Ipuwer. This literary work was recorded on papyrus of the 19th dynasty, but probably arose at the end of the Middle Kingdom in early 17th century BC.

Some researchers attribute the origin of the "Book of Days" to the Middle Kingdom, the oldest record of which is in the tomb of Ramses VI. The mention of the Keftiu people in the Book of Days in the same place as Syria should not be considered as evidence of the location of the Keftiu country in Asia. The context only points to the northern position of the Keftiu from the point of view of the Egyptians, who sailed along the Mediterranean Sea along its shores. Crete was the northernmost point of the world they knew.

The way there lay past the city of Byblos and Syria. Keftiu is also mentioned as the most distant country in the Ipuwer Papyrus.

Sacred text "Book of the Day" (fragment)
tomb of Ramses VI, Dynasty XX,
12th century BC
Tomb KV9 in Egypt's Valley of the Kings

"Beans of Keftiu" are mentioned in the Ebers Papyrus, which dates from the beginning of the 18th Dynasty. The London Medical Papyrus contains two incantations in the language of the Keftiu people.

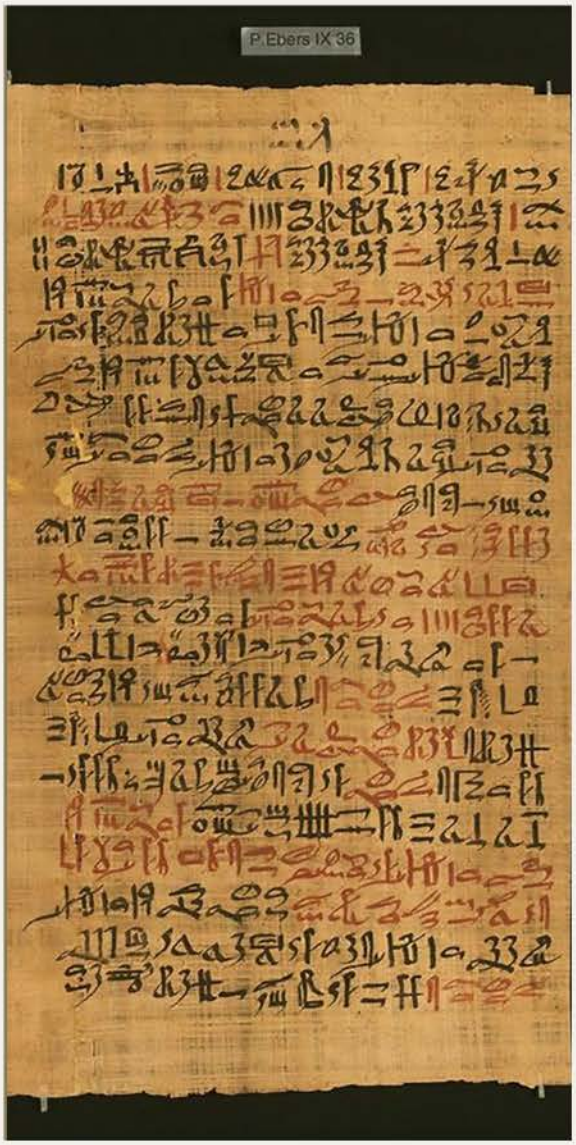
In general, most of the Egyptian documents mentioning "Keftiu" date from the reign of Hatshepsut to the reign of pharaoh Amenhotep III.

In cuneiform sources, this term appears in the 18th century BC in the archives of the city of Mari. But the existence of the term in the so-called geography of mesopotamian king Sargon the Ancient makes some researchers believe that it existed already in the 3rd millennium BC.

The appearance of the term "Keftiu" and "Kaptar" in Egyptian and cuneiform sources at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC coincides with the beginning of the period of the old palaces in Crete, when, judging by archaeological data, a state appeared on the island for the first time.

Both the Egyptians and the rulers of Mari associated a certain type of ships with the name "Keftiu" and "Kaptar". In Egypt, the ships of the country of Keftiu were first mentioned in the annals of pharaoh Thutmose III in the description of the campaign of the 34th year of his reign.

The archives of Mari mention the construction of a Cretan-type ship. Probably, they mean the multi-oared ships as in the frescoes from Akrotiri.



Egyptian medical papyrus of herbal knowledge dating to circa 1550 BC, library of the University of Leipzig

Disappearance of the term

The latest mention of "Kaptar" in cuneiform texts is a document from the 13th century BC from Ugarit. This document mentions a ship returning from Crete. Only the description of the empire of Sargon of Akkadian, preserved in the record of the 8th century BC, dates back to a later time.

In Egypt during the 19th dynasty, the term "Keftiu" continues to be used only in stereotyped lists of countries that reproduced old samples. After the 19th Dynasty, the term “Keftiu” was used only in the Book of the Day in the tomb of Ramses VI and in several texts from the Ptolemaic era. In the Decree of Canopus of the Ptolemaic period, in a text written in hieroglyphs, the country of Keftiu corresponds to Syria in a text written in demotic script.

The disappearance of the term "Keftiu" and "Kaptar" in the 13th century BC coincides with the decline of the palace culture of the Bronze Age in Crete in the late Minoan period IIIB and the beginning of the era of the "Sea Peoples".

Cretans and Egypt

The distance from Crete to Egypt in a straight line is 350 miles.There are two possible sea routes from Crete to Egypt: along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, bypassing Anatolia and the Levant, to Pelusium, or along the open sea to future Cyrene and further along the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

The intensive trade relations between Crete and Egypt during the 18th Dynasty are confirmed by archaeological finds in the Minoan port of Kommos. Egyptian transport amphorae are found in layers from the late Minoan period I to the late Minoan period IIIA1.

During the 18th Dynasty, the tombs of the Egyptian supreme nobles were often depicted with scenes of the bringing of gifts by foreigners. Cretans often appear among them. The earliest such image comes from the tomb of Senenmut in reign of Hatshepsut, at the latest belongs to the era of Amenhotep II.

During the reign of Amenhotep III, the country of Keftiu is listed among the conquered countries.

Minoan wall paintings have been found in two Egyptian palaces at Tell el-Daba. They date from the era of Thutmose III. Perhaps Tell el-Daba should be identified with the Egyptian port of the 18th dynasty of Herunefer. The document of Thutmose III - Amenhotep II mentions Keftiu ships in the port of Herunefer.

Fragmentary Scene of Foreigners, Tomb of Senenmut (TT71), ca. 1479–1458 BCE

People of Keftiu and People of t3-n3-jj-w

In two Egyptian documents, the term "Keftiu" is associated with the term "t3-n3-jj-w".

The Annals of Thutmose III mentions the bringing to the country of the silver jug "Keftiu" by the leader of the 3-n3-jj . In the topographic list of Amenhotep III of Kom el-Hettan there are two figures of captives with the names "Keftiu" and "t3-n3-jj-w", and on the left is a list of toponyms of Crete and the Peloponnese.

These two testimonies give reason to identify the t3-n3-jj-w with the Mycenaean Greeks, who came to power in Crete in the 15th century BC.

This interpretation is confirmed by the find in Kom el-Hittan of another fragment of the topographical list of Amenhotep III. This list also mentions another Greek tribe, the Ionians. Previously, the Ionians were known only from sources of a later time.

Based on the foregoing, we can state the fact that today almost all researchers share the localization of the Keftiu people as Cretans.

However, this is not the only point of view. There are scholars who believe that the people of Keftiu lived on islands in the Nile Delta or in the Levant among the city-states of Ancient Canaan.

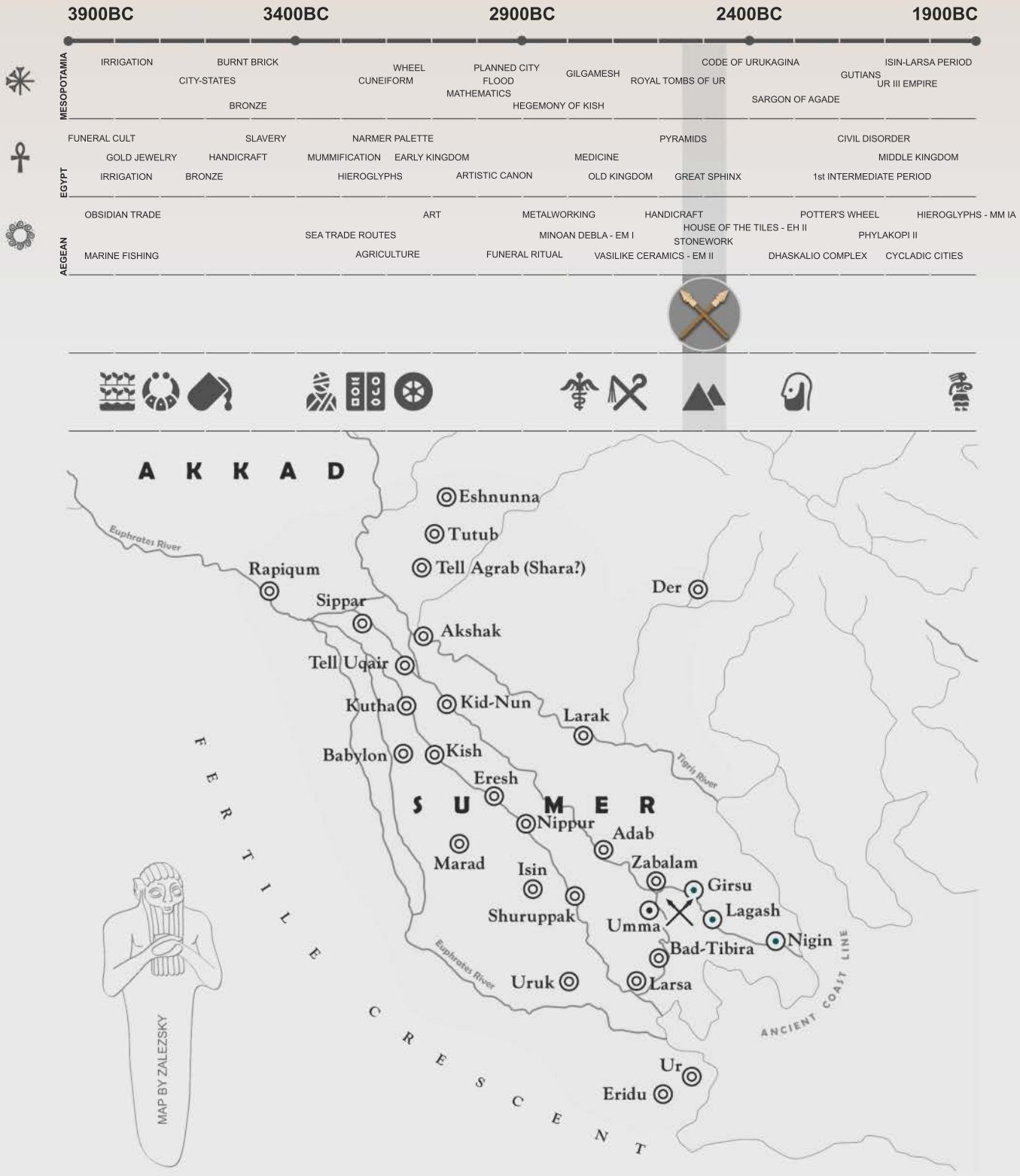
BACK TO CONTENTS

LADY OF URUK | ANCIENT SUMER | 3200-3000 BCE

BRONZE AGE
R/AGEOFBRONZE REDDIT

HUNDRED YEARS' WAR OF THE BRONZE AGE

BLOODY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN LAGASH AND UMMA



In the middle of the third millennium BC, a military conflict occurred on the land of ancient Sumer, which was not inferior in its severity to the modern one. The war between the cities of Lagash and Umma over the fertile border region of Guedena lasted for several generations. The joy of victory was replaced by the bitterness of defeat, the brief peace - bloody battles. It seemed that nothing could stop this eternal series of battles.

LISTEN AS A YOUTUBE PODCAST

At the dawn of Sumerian civilization, small villages were surrounded by uninhabited swamps and dry plains between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The industrious Sumerian people mastered more and more new territories in the southern part of Mesopotamia.

New villages were founded here, irrigation canals were built, and the population grew. Approximately in the XXVIII century BC there were no free lands left.

The Sumerians lived in separate, independent communities. The religious and economic center of the community was the temple of the patron god.

The first city-states in the history of mankind began to form around such temples. Thus, the temples also became political centers. Historians identify about twenty such political centers in Sumer.

Despite the absence of metals, wood and building stone in Mesopotamia, the main problem of Ancient Sumer was the lack of food. Production, primarily of grain, lagged behind the growth in the number of nome residents.

The way out of the difficult economic situation was the seizure from neighbors of their fields or plots, where they controlled the vital irrigation system. With control over the water, you could dictate your will to your neighbors.

Usually, under the leadership of a talented military leader, the Sumerian city defeated its closest rivals, took disputed territories and forced the losers to pay tribute. The military leader was called lugal, which means a big man.

Successful generals began to pass on their title and power by inheritance. Over time, the big people became the de facto rulers of the Sumerian city-states. We know of dynasties that ruled for five or more generations. Nowadays, for convenience, such rulers are called kings.

When a less capable commander was in power in the victorious city, the enemies again rose to fight. Conflicts over land and water have continued for centuries.

Sometimes one city managed to defeat most of the other cities. The winner took part of the harvest from the defeated and

demanded to participate in his construction projects. At the same time, the former elite retained power in the defeated cities.

The first known hegemon of all of Sumer was the city of Kish. The military domination of Kish left such a strong mark on the history of the Sumerians that all subsequent hegemon declared themselves Kings of Kish regardless of their origin.

More than once, great warriors forced most communities to pay tribute and do work for their cities, but none of them was able to create a unified state. The era of wars between the Sumerian cities and the dynasties of their kings is called the early dynastic period.

A typical example of a conflict between two city-states is the war between the Umma and Lagash.

Opposing sides: Lagash and Umma

The name of the city of Lagash in translation from Sumerian means "storehouse". The patron deity of this place was the god of agriculture, Ningirsu. The name of this deity translates as the ruler of a place called Girsu. Girsu was the second most populous city, but the center of religious life. In addition, six small towns were surrounded by defensive walls. The total land area of the Lagash community is estimated at approximately 1,000 square kilometers or 38,000 square miles.

Agriculture relied on the Tigris River, flowing through the "possession" of the god Ningirsu for 65 kilometers, and seven large canals with a total length of about 100 kilometers. The total irrigation system was about 200 kilometers, or 125 miles.

The free population of the entire region was approximately 150 thousand people, of which 36 thousand are adult men.

Located on the outskirts of the Sumerian lands, Lagash stood out in a special area, which was opposed to the rest of Sumer. The rulers of Lagash were not included in the general Sumerian lists.

The city-state called Umma was located in the southeastern part of Sumer between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Historians have only a few fragmentary sources about the Umma. They suggest that in its development, this political center followed a path similar to the more famous Sumerian cities. The notions of society and statehood in the Umma did not differ. All the land and everything that was on it was considered the property of the god of war named Shara.

Girsu Excavation Model by Philippe Fuzeau, Louvre Museum

The beginning of a border dispute

The lands of the Umma began 15-20 km north of Lagash. The contact line ran several kilometers from west to east. The border area called Guedena was very fertile and therefore of great value. Both the residents of the Umma and the residents of Lagash wanted to get this territory and disputed its ownership.

The exact time of the beginning of the dispute is unknown, but when around 2500 BC. Umma and Lagash were dependent on the king from the north, he already existed. The powerful ruler was called Mesilim. He established his rule over a significant part of Sumer, dictated his will to the defeated and took the title of King of Kish.

Wanting to solve Guedena's problem forever, he divided it up among the disputants. Calling the oracle of the god of justice Ištaran to help, King Mesilim marked the new border with a moat and erected a stele with the corresponding inscription.

An ancient Sumerian source describes these events: "Enlil, the king of all lands, the father of all gods, determined the border for the god Ningirsu and the god Shara with his indestructible word. Mesilim, the King of Kish, divided everything at the word of Ištaran and erected a stele there."

Lagash was quite pleased with the section. The Umma were dissatisfied with this decision, but there was no way to argue with Mesilim.

Cone of Enmetena, Mesopotamia, Ancient Sumer, Early Dynastic III period, 2420–2400 BCE, Louvre

me-silim lugal kiški-ke4 inim dištaran-na-ta eš2 gana2 be2-ra ki-ba na bi2-ru2

Mesilim, king of Kiš, at the command of Ištaran, measured the field and set up a stele there

Round two: Eanatum from Lagash vs. Ush from Umma

The next ruler of Lagash was the son of the deceased Akurgal named Eanatum.

During the first years in power, he was engaged in the restoration of the economy, which had suffered from the war. Having learned the bitter lesson of military defeat, the inhabitants of Lagash focused their efforts on building a powerful army.

After a while, Eanatum found himself strong enough to take revenge on his father's murderer. In the decisive battle, the Umma army was almost completely destroyed. After the catastrophic defeat in the Umma, an uprising broke out, the victim of which was Ush.

As for the ruler of Lagash, he restored the border in accordance with the decision of Mesilim and put several of his own border steles. One of them is the world famous "Stele of Vultures", which has survived to this day, on which there is the following inscription:

"I, Eanatum, rushed to the Umma like an evil wind, like a flood.
The people of the Umma were defeated by my weapon,
I made mountains from their corpses.
Eanatum struck, 3600 warriors were slain.
He defeated the Umma and made twenty mounds of corpses.
Eanatum wept sweet tears of joy before the gods.
Eanatum returned to Ningirsu his beloved field Guedena."

Stele of the Vultures (fragment), Mesopotamia, Ancient Sumer, Early Dynastic III period, circa 2450 BCE, Louvre Museum

To summon the Sumerian gods to witness the justice of his deeds and the inviolability of the border, Eanatum built several new sanctuaries in Guedena.

The defeated people of the Umma elected a new ruler named Enakale. He vowed never to fight Lagash:

"Never forever and ever will I violate the borders of Ningirsu, I will never invade its dams and canals, I will never split a single stele. If I break the borders, then let the net for the captives of the god Enlil fall on the Umma from heaven."

Oddly enough, but Eanatum wanted to reach a compromise with his neighbors and finally resolve the border conflict. He allocated a strip of neutral territory between the two states, and also gave the defeated enemies the fields in Guedena and even other lands of Lagash. For this, people from the Umma had to transfer to Eanatum and his heirs a part of the harvest grown on these lands.

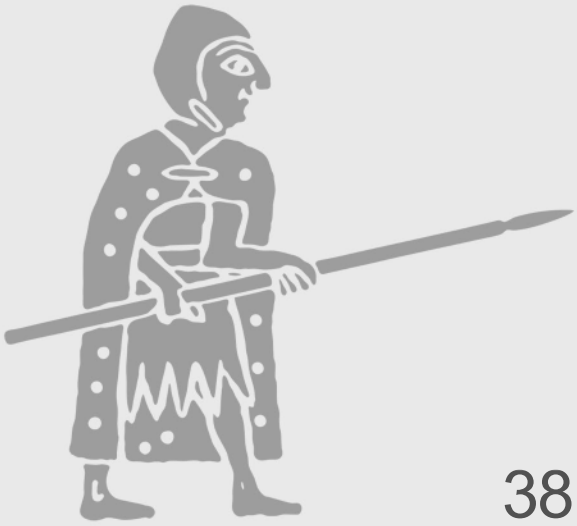
Having dealt with the old enemy, the ruler of Lagash continued to fight. First, the southern Sumerian cities were defeated, and then a victorious campaign to the east against the country of Elam followed. Then Eanatum proclaimed himself the King of Kish. To confirm this title, he needed to defeat the northern union of the cities of Akshak and Kish. The army of the northerners invaded the lands of Lagash, but was defeated and retreated. Although the conquest of all of Sumer was still a long way off, Eanatum had big plans for the future.

Having temporarily stopped military campaigns, he decided to take up the economy and began to build a grandiose irrigation canal.

But Eanatum failed to rest on his laurels. The recently defeated Elamites went to war against the Lagash Empire. With great difficulty, the soldiers from Lagash managed to drive the enemy out of their territory. While Eanatum's army fought against Elam, the armies of Akshak and Kish invaded the lands of Lagash. Again the inhabitants of Lagash defeated them.

Taking advantage of the departure of the royal army, the Elamites again attacked from the east. Eanatum had to fight them. At the same time, Akshak and Kish made an alliance with the powerful city of Mari. It is difficult to imagine what efforts it took Eanatum to defeat the allies. However, he did it.

Soon after another triumph, the great commander disappears from historical sources, and his brother comes in his place. It is very likely that luck still turned away from the ruler of the Lagash Empire and he died in one of the subsequent battles.



Round three: Enanatum of Lagash vs. Ur-Lumma of Umma

When Eanatum's brother with a very similar name, Enanatum, inherited power over Lagash and the nomes subordinate to him, he was already an old man. At the same time, the ruler of Anakale, who was elected ruler after defeat, died in the Umma. His son and heir named Ur-Lumma considered that his father's oath did not apply to him, and refused to pay tribute to Lagash.

To the aid of the people from the Umma came unknown "foreigners" from the north, and the army of the allies defeated Enanatum.

Lagash lost Guedena. Enemies buried ditches, smashed border steles and destroyed the sanctuaries of the gods.

An ancient source from Lagash contains the following lines:

"Ur-Lumma, the ruler of the Umma, drained the Ningirsu border ditch and Ningirsu border ditch, dug and burned the steles of the border ditch, destroyed the sanctuaries of the gods in the border settlement, received help from foreign countries and finally crossed the Ningirsu border ditch."

Lion-headed Eagle of Lagash, Mace head, dedicated to the life of Enanatum, Mesopotamia, Ancient Sumer, Early Dynastic III period, 2600–2350 BC,
© The Trustees of the British Museum

Round four: Entemena of Lagash vs. Ur-Lumma of Umma

As mentioned, Enanatum was an elderly man. He not only could not keep the conquered cities of his brother, but also protect the borders of the ancestral lands of Lagash. Documents available to us show that after the military setbacks, Enanatum disappears from the records. The fate of this ruler is not known for certain - most likely, he died a natural death. This version is supported by the fact that Lagash was headed by the son of Enanatum named Entemena.

The first act of the new king was the battle with the Umma. The battle took place near a city called Ghana-Ugiga:

"Enanatum, ruler of Lagash,
on the field of Ugiga and on the field of Ningirsu previously fought with enemies, but Entemena, the beloved son of Enannatum, defeated them.
Ur-Lumma fled to the city of Umma and was killed.
His donkeys, sixty chariots, remained on the bank of the canal,
and the bones of their warriors remained on the plain.
Mounds from their bodies remained in five places."

Apparently, the people of the Umma were defeated, and the army of Lagash reached the walls of the Umma itself. According to tradition, the loser in the war, the ruler of Ur-Lumma was killed by his people during the uprising against him.

Lagash failed to fully enjoy the fruits of the victory. A third party intervened in the conflict. To the north of the Umma was the Sumerian city of Zabalam. His army, led by a man named Il (as in ill), ravaged the northern lands of Lagash, and then retreated.

The defeated side needed a strong leader, and Ile was perfect for this. In the Umma, he was elected as the new high priest and ruler. To show his strength to his subjects, Il began to provoke Lagash into a new conflict. For this he paid only a tiny part of the tribute.

Entemena did not dare to start a new war with the Umma and tried to resolve the dispute diplomatically. Just at this time, a warlord reappears in Sumer, who has won the title of King of Kish. This man, whose name we do not know, forced the parties to recognize the first boundary set by King Mesilim at the very beginning of the conflict. As compensation, the Umma no longer had to pay tribute to Lagash.

Five generations of war

The ruler of the city of Lagash named Entemena and the ruler of the city of Umma named Il lived to old age and died of natural causes. During their lifetime, rival cities no longer disputed the ownership of the Guedena area.

Entemena's son, Enanatum II, began to rule in Lagash. He did nothing of note and lost power a few years after the start of his reign. With his departure, the dynasty of Lagash rulers, founded by King Ur-Nanshe five generations earlier, ended.

From 2450 to 2334 BCE, conflict between neighboring Sumerian city-states lasted over the fertile fields of Guedena. Other Sumerian cities and their powerful kings were drawn into this conflict. After one hundred and sixteen years of bloody battles and periods of fragile peace, the situation has returned to its original position.

Follows Next >>
When disturbed the Divine Law: Sumerian city-states of Lagash and Umma after the Hundred Years War.

LIKED? WANT MORE? SUPPORT US!

BECOME A PATRON

OR DONATE NOW

BRONZE AGE
R/AGEOFBRONZE REDDIT